
REMARKS

ON A

LETTER

IN THE

GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE,

Concerning Excepting against the

Confirmation of a BISHOP.

(Price Six-pence.)

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ON A

LETTER



GENERAL AGAINE

Concerning Exceeding against the

Confirmation of a Bishop.

(Price Six pence.)

R E M A R K S

O N A

L E T T E R

I N

K. B., a.

*The Gentleman's Magazine
of February last,*

Concerning Excepting against the

Confirmation of a BISHOP.

To which is prefix'd

The said L E T T E R.

*Accipe nunc Danaum Infidias, & Crimine ab uno
Disce omnes.*

VIRG.

L O N D O N :

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REMARKS

LETTER

The Gentleman's Magazine
a February 1781

Containing Experiments, &c.

Continuation of a Bishop



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1781

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Globe, in Pall Mall

To the Author of the

GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE.

S I R,

THE *Papists* vainly object to us, that the whole Protestant Religion is of *human* Structure; that it is only a *Parliamentary* Religion, and intirely the Creature of the *Civil Magistrate*; that neither the Clergy, nor the People, have the Ability left them to execute the Powers with which Jesus Christ entrusted them: But that the King, tho' limited in Civil Matters, is so absolute in Church Affairs, that the Bishops, however strictly enjoin'd by

by the Apostles, can neither *to any Purpose* examine into the Merits of those they are to ordain or consecrate; nor the People, tho' allow'd that Liberty from all Antiquity, thro'out all Christendom, can *to any Purpose* object to their Morals or their Principles. Now in answer to all this, I will not reply, That neither the Bishops nor the Christian Laity *can ever* part with, or resign, *any* essential *Rights*, with which they stand invested by the Christian Religion; I have no Occasion for such a Plea. But I will produce an Instance from our own History, whereby it will be manifest, that the Claim denied us by our *Papist* Adversaries, has been not only allowed, but exercised
in

in this *Protestant* Nation. The following Quotation from the Rev. Mr. *Collier's Eccles. Hist.* Vol. II. p. 745. will put this Matter beyond Dispute.

Soon after the Recess of the Parliament, Laud was translated from Bath and Wells to London, and Montague promoted to the See of Chichester. Before he was consecrated, an unexpected Rub was thrown in the Way: At the Confirmation of Bishops in the Court of Arches at Bow-Church, Cheapside, there is publick Notice given, That if any Persons can object either against the Party elected, or the Legality of the Election, they are to come and offer their Exceptions
at

at the Day prefix'd. This Intimation being given, one Jones, a Bookseller, attended with the Mob, appearing at the Confirmation, excepted against Montague, as a Person unqualify'd for the Episcopal Dignity. And to be somewhat particular, he charges him with Popery, Arminianism, and other Heterodoxies, for which his Books had been censured in the former Parliament. But Dr. Tho. Rives, who then officiated for Brent, the Vicar-General, disappointed this Challenge. For Jones had made some material Omissions in the Manner, and not offer'd his Objections in Form of Law. For the Purpose, the Exceptions were neither given in Writing, nor sign'd by an Advocate,

cate, nor presented by any Proctor of the Court. Upon the Failure of these Circumstances, the Confirmation went on.

The *Parliament*, not at first apprised in Point of Form, were dissatisfied with the Conduct of the *Vicar General*, and enquired into the Behaviour of Dr. *Rives*, on that Occasion. From that Enquiry I will make these two Observations; 1st, That Dr. *Rives*, a very great and eminent Civilian and Canonist, admitted that the *Opposition* was good and valid, had it been *legally* offered. 2^{dly}, That the *Parliament* of that Time insisted upon the same Assertion, and only desisted from the Prosecution for the Reason above-mentioned.

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Thus

Thus guarded stands this Fact; yet this was a Fact liable to many Objections. But should we ever see the Day when, not a rash *Puritan* attended by the Mob, but when Men of a *different Character*, assisted by the Prayers and good Wishes of all the hearty Friends to Christianity, shou'd appear at the *Confirmation*, not only against a *Montague*, a Person indeed justly complained of, for his *Political* Notions, but against a *Man*, that shou'd be accused *even of Infidelity*, I doubt not but We shou'd convince our *Popish Enemies*, that the *Church of England* has neither resign'd her Rights, nor lost her Courage, but

but is still able to defend herself against the *Papists*, and all her other Adversaries. I am,

Sir, your humble Servant,

A. B.

P. S. Bishop Burnet, in his History, Vol. II. just publish'd, p. 119. has a remarkable Passage to the same Purpose. — *The State of Ireland leads me to insert here a very particular Instance of the Queen's pious Care in the disposing of Bishopricks: Lord Sidney was so far engaged in the Interest of a great Family of Ireland, that he was too easily wrought on, to recommend a Branch of it to a vacant See. The Representation was made with an undue Character of the Per-*

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son;

son ; so the Queen granted it. But when she understood that he lay under a very bad Character, she wrote a Letter in her own Hand, to Lord Sidney, letting him know what she had heard, and order'd him to call for six Irish Bishops, whom she named to him, and to require them to certify to her their Opinion of that Person : They all agreed, that he labour'd under an ill Fame ; and, till that was examin'd into, they did not think it proper to promote him ; so that Matter was let fall. I do not name the Person ; for I intend not to leave a Blemish on him : But set this down as an Example fit to be imitated by Christian Princes.

RE-

REMARKS

ON THE

Foregoing LETTER.

To the Author of the GENTLE-
MAN'S MAGAZINE.

S I R,

YOUR Correspondent seems
very unnecessarily sollici-
tous to remove the Ground of
an Objection of the *Papists* against
the

the Church of *England*, which in Words he acknowledges to be vain, but treats it in such a Manner, as shews he attributes very great Weight to it ; an Objection levelled against the King's Supremacy. It is indeed no Wonder that the Regal Supremacy is so much exclaimed against by the *Papish* Clergy, since it destroy'd the Foundation of their exorbitant Power ; or that it is submitted to with secret Regret by such amongst our own Clergy, as are desirous to revive the same extravagant Claim to Dominion : But it has ever been esteemed by every dutiful Son of our Church, as her strongest Bulwark and Security against Ecclesiastical Tyranny,

ranny, and acknowledged to be much more safely entrusted to the Wisdom of a gracious King, than to the furious Ambition of haughty and domineering Prelates.

The Bishops, even in the Primitive Times, were judged so unfit to be trusted with the Power of nominating their Successors, that the People even then claimed a Right of Suffrage, as your Correspondent has well observed: but he does not appear so sensible, as he ought to be, that where Christianity has obtained a legal Establishment, the Civil Magistrate is the proper Guardian of this Right, and is justly intrusted with the Exercise of it.

Your

Your Correspondent indeed appears not to have any great Concern for this Right of the Christian Laity, though he perhaps thought it popular to pretend a Zeal for it: On the contrary, he has shewn a flagrant Disregard to it, in the Case he has cited. There never was a Charge brought by the People with greater Reason and Justice, or supported by greater Authority, in order to prevent the Confirmation of a Bishop, than that against *Montague*; a Person not only under the Censure of the House of Commons for a High Crime and Misdemeanor of a Political Nature, but likewise for maintaining in Print,

Print, even *Popish* Tenets. The Fact was so very notorious, that the honest Citizen who appeared against him, trusting too much to the manifest Goodness of his Cause, had neglected to inform himself of the Forms proper to be observed in bringing so unusual a Charge; the Method of which was little known, and perhaps had never been exactly regulated. The Doctor who officiated for the Vicar-General, and who is celebrated (not without Cause) by your Correspondent, as a very eminent Civilian and Canonist, taking Advantage of this pretended Omission, shewed his utmost Dexterity in eluding this just Charge, instead of giving

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ing proper Instructions to rectify any little Defect in the Form of it ; for which notable Service he doubtless received the Thanks of *Laud*, and the Bishops of his Party, tho' not of the Parliament.

Your Correspondent, notwithstanding he appears so zealous in maintaining the Right of Excepting against the Confirmation of a Bishop, seems not in the least displeased that so seasonable an Instance of exerting it was disappointed. This, he says, was *a Fact liable to many Objections* : The Person who appeared against *Montague* was only a worthy Citizen of *London*, ac-
com-

companied by several of his
 Fellow-Citizens; or, as he has
 more decently expressed it in
 the Ecclesiastical Stile, *a rash
 Puritan, attended by the Mob,*
 This therefore was not such an
 Opposition, as he approves of;
 it was an Opposition made, not
 by the Clergy, but by the pro-
 fane Laity; and consequently
 deserved no better Success. But
 he triumphs (it may be hoped
 in vain) in the pleasing Expec-
 tation of a more successful Op-
 position, to be made *by Men of
 a very different Character,* such
 as he perhaps esteems indelible;
 and then *he doubts not but we
 shall be able to convince our Po-
 pish Enemies* (for it seems that,

before this long expected Event, we are not, in his Opinion, furnished with any Argument sufficient to convince them) *that the Church of England*, by which he means the Clergy, by an Impropriety of Expression, familiar to Men of his Sentiments, *have neither resigned their Rights, nor lost their Courage ; but are still able to defend themselves against the Papists, and all their Other Adversaries : I presume by shewing themselves capable of disputing with their Sovereign the Power of making Bishops.*

Your Correspondent does not indeed name the Person, against whom a Right, which has so long lain

lain dormant, is to be exerted; but he has of late been so much the Object of that charitable Affection, stiled by the Learned, *Oidium Theologicum*, and so much malicious Industry has been employ'd in spreading Reports to his Disadvantage, that he is sufficiently pointed out by common Fame; and it is from thence that I am engaged to vindicate him from such unworthy Treatment. His very Enemies, such of them as have the least Ingenuity, must own him to be a Man of Sense and Learning, and of an unblemished Life and Conversation. He is well known to have lived many Years in the strictest Friendship and Intimacy

cy with a Bishop of a very worthy Character, to whom he was a Domestic Chaplain, and who conferred on him several great Benefices and Dignities; and his Interest is at present warmly espoused by a noble Lord, whose great Qualifications are above all Panegyric, and whose Approbation gives a Sanction to his Character, sufficient to provoke all the Rage and all the Despair of Envy.

The Misrepresentations, so industriously propagated, and so injurious to his Character, may justly surprise such as have not the Happiness to be acquainted with him; and must doubtless be

be received with Indignation by his Friends, to whom an intimate Knowledge of his Sentiments gives the highest Assurance of the Falshood of such a Charge. The Ground of it, as far as it can be traced from the dark Intimations given out by his Adversaries, was merely owing to the trivial Accident of his having been engaged in Conversation, many Years ago, with a Person of greater Zeal than Judgment. The Dispute turned upon some nice Point ; and the zealous Gentleman, as it is too usual with Persons violently attached to their own narrow Way of Thinking, setting up his own Opinions as the Standard of Orthodoxy,

doxy, conceived a strong Imagination, that he must needs be an Infidel, who presumed to call them in question. This Suspicion, so long concealed, seems now to be ripened, by the Warmth of some powerful Influence, into an Accusation, threatening at this critical Juncture to be disclosed in full Maturity, and breathing all the Poison of Party-Zeal.

What passes in private Conversations, is so very liable to be misunderstood, or misrepresented, and the divulging it argues so much Treachery and Disingenuity, that little Credit is given to Relations of this Kind, even where no malicious Design appears,

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gument fairly stated? How frequent are the Mistakes made, even by People of good Sense, in relating what they have newly heard, and have no Intention to misrepresent? And what Credit can then be given to a Tale new furbished up, after many Years of Silence, in which Memory may have borrowed Assistance of Invention, and the Seeds of Remembrance, quickened by Imagination, may even insensibly have produced an abundant Increase; a Tale, fraught with such inveterate Malice, and craftily reserved to a Time, when it may do the greatest Mischief?

With

With what Assurance can any one undertake the vile Part of an Informer, under such suspicious Circumstances? With what Confidence can he appear, not against a *Montague*, a Man under the Censure of Parliament for High Crimes and Popish Errors; but against a Person of a fair Character, advanced to the Episcopal Dignity by so wise and religious a King, at so honourable a Recommendation? And how can he dare to affront the mild and venerable Court, where Protestant Bishops preside, with so spiteful and so shocking an Accusation, as even Inquisitors might refuse to admit, or Je-

suits might blush to lend an Ear to? Who that had the least Remains of Modesty or Ingenuity, would chuse to place himself in such an odious Light, and to stand exposed to the Detestation of all who have the common Sentiments of Justice or Humanity? What Reflections must rise in every worthy Mind on the hearing of so monstrous a Charge! And what Thoughts must every honest Heart conceive of him who is capable of offering it, or even of those who give the least Credit or Countenance to it!

Your Correspondent seems to flatter himself (for I rather chuse
to

to take him to be the Informer, than to give myself Leave to imagine there are two Persons engaged in so Dishonourable a Design) that he shall be *assisted by the Prayers and good Wishes of all the hearty Friends to Christianity* : But he must have formed very unworthy Notions of the Christian Religion, who can think it will dispose Men to promote and encourage so gross a Calumny, supported by such slender Evidence.

But, supposing some weak Minds may be so far misled by the specious Deceits of Artifice and Insinuation, the holy Fathers of our Church must unquestionably

nably look with Abhorrence on such an audacious Accuser of One of their Brethren, and One so well qualified to be an Honour to their Order. They, if ever they should have just Reason to be dissatisfied with the Character of a Person presented to them to be admitted into their own Order, must be far from stirring up such an ungenerous Opposition, or promoting such an open Accusation. Their Prudence and Moderation must certainly incline them to chuse the more decent Method, recommended by Bishop *Burnet*, and referred to by your Correspondent. They would, we may presume, content themselves with

humbly

humbly representing the Case to his Majesty, whose tender Care of the Church, and just Regard to their Honour and Dignity, might assure them of his gracious Compliance, if in his great Wisdom he apprehended there was just Cause for it. We may indeed very justly hope this is a Case that will never happen, or at least that there is not the least Shadow of it at present: But if, in any future Reign, a Sett of Bishops of a different Temper from the present Fathers of our Church, should enter into a Confederacy against a Bishop, elected by a Royal Mandate, and endeavour to find a Pretence for setting him aside,

by

by spiriting up some mean Sy-
cophant to except against his
Confirmation, they would be
thought, by every true Lover of
our Constitution, instead of as-
serting a Right belonging to
their sacred Office, to be, at
least indirectly, attempting an
Infringement of the Regal Su-
premacy.

I am, &c.

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